

ANARCHISM OLD AND NEW: A LETTER FROM THE BLACK FLAG EDITORS

There's a part in the PBS documentary *The Elegant Universe* in which physicist Brian Greene points out that "Scientists needed nothing more than Newton's equations to plot the course of a rocket that landed men on the moon." His point? That some ideas are so powerful, effective, and insightful that even after 280-some years (the time between the first publication of Newton's *Principia* and the launch of Apollo 11), they are still useful and are still frequently applicable. Never mind that in the first two decades of the 20th century Einstein had re-worked the laws of gravity into a new theory of space and time, a theory that you need if you want to seriously study black holes, gravitational waves, and the Big Bang. No matter. If you want to send people to the Moon, Newton will do just fine.

Our point in bringing up this arcane reflection on theoretical physics? To remind people that just because an idea is *old*, it is not automatically *obsolete*. This fact has a great deal of relevance for contemporary anarchism, as we'll soon discuss. But first we'll need to make a little detour:

Whether or not one considers

labor unions to be a force for revolutionary change (and in some times and places, certain radical labor unions like the IWW undoubtedly can be), having a large number of workers organized into unions improves wages, benefits, and working conditions for all workers, unionized and non-unionized alike. This fact isn't very surprising if one really thinks about it—elementary economics and human psychology seem to dictate that victories and improvements for one set of workers make such advances more plausible for others. However, we are living through a very dismal time for organized labor. According to 2012 data from the Bureau of Labor statistics, "the percent of wage and salary workers who were members of a union" was a mere 11.3 percent, down from 11.8 percent in 2011. Interestingly, public sector workers—like teachers, firefighters, and librarians, to name a few important examples—"had a union membership rate (35.9 percent) more than five times higher than that of

private-sector workers (6.6 percent)." And the current austerity program, fueled by the mendacity of reactionary deficit hawks (look up, for example, Lynn Parramore's recent Alternet piece "Did You Know the Deficit Is Shrinking? Most Americans Don't, Thanks to Shameless Deficit Hawk Propaganda"), disproportionately targets public sector unions by drying up funding for public sector jobs. Think, for example, of the mass of closure of unionized public schools in places like Boston, NY, and Chicago (and, increasingly, LA), and their replacement by non-union, privately-managed charter schools. Simply put, the austerity approach is, among other things, grade-A 21st Century union-

busting (with a neoliberal face).

The issue of charter schools, while we're mentioning them, is helpful in understanding exactly why most of the mainstream, Democratic-Party-funding, liberal unions—with their get-out-the-vote campaigns and their armies of venal, power-hungry, political-ladder-climbing bureaucrats—are essentially useless in staying off these assaults on the working class. SEIU is a good example of this type of union, in case you were drawing a blank. Another good example is the public teachers' union here in LA, the United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA). In recent years, the UTLA leadership has refused to take a position firmly against charter schools, and, after his tenure ended, the previous UTLA President, A. J. Duffy, opened up his own charter school. Never mind that every student that leaves a unionized public school for an unorganized charter is slowly contributing to both the death of the American public school system and to the busting

Continued on page 7...



DEFINING CAPITALISM BY MARK LIPMAN

As with most differences stemming from conflicting ideologies, the stumbling blocks in communication tend to be over semantics the use of—and reactionary responses around—certain words, and the understating and definition of those words. At such times, the most effective and simplest way to arrive at a common understanding of what one is speaking about, to clearly define the subject at hand, is to open the dictionary.

To that point, let us quote and consult Webster's New World Dictionary in order to give us a point of reference so that we know what we are talking about when we enter into debate.

It says verbatim, "Capitalism: 1. The economic system in which all or most of the means of production and distribution, as land, factories, railroads, etc., are privately owned and operated for profit, originally under fully competitive conditions: it has

been generally characterized by a tendency towards concentration of wealth, and, in its later phase, by growth of great corporations, increased governmental control, etc. 2. The principles, methods, interests, power, influence, etc. of capitalists, especially those with large holdings."

Like it or not, that is the definition of Capitalism. There are no points to argue. You cannot argue with a dictionary.

Continued on page 3...

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

MAD!! Now WHAT??	2
FOXY 6	2
UNPACKING TRANSPHOBIA	4
MOVING BEYOND THE MEME	5
POETRY	6
A SOCIALIST'S TAKE ON GUN VIOLENCE	8
ROCHESTER RED AND BLACK TOUR	10

MAD!! NOW WHAT??

We anarchists are well known for our non-dogmatic approach to organizing/theorizing, and in that spirit, I would like to mention that I am tired of comrades telling others to be mad, and even more so, what to do once they are. The oppression of capital, and the state violence used in the defense of it, will naturally harm the people. The question isn't "how do we get people mad?" but rather, "what do we do once they are?"

I will use two examples from Los Angeles, as I am LA based, that I feel bring up two very good points.

1. Manuel Jamines Xum Murder: After the murder of this being we began to organize in the community. Before long the people's outrage at this blatant racist murder erupted. The people clashed on the streets with the police. I had been organizing around this issue and yet did not have shields to pass out for protection from police batons, masks for safety of identity/chemical agents, and other such supplies. The people fought with their bare hands, and I fear that some were disheartened by the outcome.
2. Chalk walk Los Angeles: On one art walk unlike the rest, Occupy Los Angeles, which was at the time still alive and well, went on their usual chalk walk—a form of protest that was to be denounced as a form of property destruction by the county of Los Angeles. As people joined the protest, the police, doing the only thing they know how, attempted to beat the protesters into submission to the capitalist law. The people being beaten were not activists but average Joes and Janes who joined the protest not fully understanding what could occur. However, once the state violence began, the chalk-walkers did what was natural to them: they defended themselves!

The first point I'm making is that the people who rise up and challenge state power aren't necessarily these highly politicized beings. They are often just people who have suffered another blow from the state, and hence they do not overthink the situation but act naturally and defend themselves. Secondly, both movements died down after the initial spontaneous clash.

How different would these situations have been if anarchists like myself had been bent on an accumulation of tools for the people to use? Instead, I told people to be mad, and to organize or bloc because of that rage, and at a drop of a hat the people stood and all my words played no real part in that rage. How different would the Manuel Jamines incident had been if we anarchists had walked carrying duffle bags full of shields and bats? How different would the chalk walk incident have been if we had bags full of bricks to set on the ground?

FOXY 6

Please Donate to Resist State Repression of Protesters: A Comradely Plea from the "Foxy 6."

The four of the Foxy 6 who are facing felony charges—Chris, Benji, Ulises and Alex—are still making their way to an eventual courtroom showdown with the Pasadena police.

We have \$2,215 left to raise to pay off bail money, plus another \$250 for legal costs.

It would also be cool if we could finally raise some money to pay for the dental work of a protestor who got his teeth knocked out by a police officer during the arrests.

Now, these are serious questions to be asked as the answers will play a crucial role in our practice.

To begin with, we do not believe in a hierarchical structure for anything, much less for a bloc. This will allow things to be fluid and prevent beings from getting lost over what they are willing to do and who they would like to work with. Come with your trusted affinity group and partake in what action you agree with. Affinity groups could even come prepared to help in the manner best suited for them: People need to eat and drink—bring food and water; "Thanks for the mask, I forgot mine today"; "Thanks for the medical care—didn't see that baton coming from the back"; "You've been keeping watch and seen a group of cops coming from this street—thanks for the heads up"; etc, etc.

This stance will also help with the paranoia that plagues our movement. I don't need to know who you are, or what you plan to do with that brick, bat, shield, mask, spray can, and whatever else other comrades bring. All I know is that I brought mine for anarcho-revolutionary reasons. Do what you see fit to be done.

This is the work for revolutionaries: think out possible scenarios and come prepared to protect the people and harm the state. You're not always going to get it right, but the people will let you know when you did or didn't by using what you brought, and sometimes it is better to have it than not. Let the states do what they do and attempt to control resistance, telling people when and what should get them mad, and how to act when they get mad. We anarchists, on the other hand, need to provide tools to empower the people when they are upset, and trust the people when they act. We are part of the people, not separate; hence, when they move, let's do the same. Attack the state!! Defend the workers!!

'TIL VICTORY OR DEATH!



The defendants are too broke to pay for it all themselves (they've put in thousands of their own money so far), so we're asking you to please donate what you can to their legal defense fund. Here's the online donation link:

<https://www.wepay.com/donations/free-alex-and-all-political-prisoners>

Thanks for your ongoing support and solidarity!

--The Foxy 6, with the hearty endorsement of your humble Black Flag publication team.

"Defining Capitalism" continued...

Dictionaries simply give a frame of reference to define what we are talking about, from which a conversation can begin with a common understanding.



So now, let us examine the definition of Capitalism to see whether or not it is a system designed for the greater good of all humanity, or if it is a means of exploitation of the many for the benefit of a few.

To start, let us look at the first half of number 1 in the definition: "The economic system in which all or most of the means of production and distribution, as land, factories, railroads, etc. are privately owned and operated for profit." Here we begin, "all or most ... privately owned ... for profit." That leads me to question: How did "all or most" become privately owned in the first place? The definition mentions "land," and that would be a logical starting point, for you cannot have factories or railroads without the land to first put them on. So how did the capitalists get control of the land? They stole it. Plain and simple, they stole it. They got on boats originating in Europe, came to America with advanced weaponry and soldiers and just took the land by force, from the native inhabitants, through pillage and murder.

Now, after seizing the land, the exploitation of the natural resources of the land must have been the next logical step in the process, for you cannot put up a factory or lay rails over a forest. Yet such exploitation takes labor; someone needs to do the physical work in order to convert the natural resources into products that can be sold in order to have the capital to build the factories. So in come the job creators, also known as slave owners.

Natives from militarily conquered territories became the cheap labor that the original capitalists used in order to acquire the wealth to support their enterprise. They—along with indentured servants who bought their passage to the "land of the free" by giving up their freedom for a number of years—were the original work force of America. Combined with slavery, the free labor they produced made the capitalists extremely rich.

Now comes the advent of industrialization, the building of factories, etc., the original mills and mines and sweatshop assembly lines in which the working class—the great plurality of impoverished workers—struggled and saved and scraped by in order to inch their way up the ladder over a period of generations. They are and were the backbone of the country, having built the great society of today with their own hands, while the owners, the capitalists, took in the lion's share of the profit from that labor and then wrapped their heads around the idea that they built their economic empire all by themselves; that they were entitled to the good life, while "half the workers were paid to kill the other half of the workers" (J.P. Morgan)... The other half who demanded fair wages and benefits.

That briefly is the history of early Capitalism. Yet, before moving on, we must look also at the next part of the definition, which states: "originally under fully competitive conditions." Well, referring back to the indisputable history of Capitalism, "fully competitive" would actually—in all reality—only include those who had the initial capital to invest into their enterprise.

For the rest, for that start-up-capital, many turned to the banks for loans. These loans made through fractional banking practices (the creation of capital out of thin air) and interest rates, ensured that the rich would continue to get richer, while opening up possibilities to a growing number of capitalists. Such possibilities were only possible due to an expanding market—the expansion of colonization into the west and south, where more land and natural resources were waiting to be conquered. Remember, at this period of history more capitalists were needed in order to "capture" the market, and capturing markets was only possible in many cases by war and the overthrow of democratically elected governments (especially democratically elected communist governments), and so the investment, and subsequently the profiteering from war, became an essential part of Capitalism.

It is also important to note when discussing the term "fully competitive" that this term is very misleading, for as most newly enterprising capitalists needed to borrow money from the banks in order to have the capital to invest, the banks had a great say in who actually received those loans and for what purpose that money would be used. This led to a great disparity in banking practices advantaging certain communities, while disadvantaging others.

Former slaves and other minorities, including women, were rarely able to receive loans to start a business, and if they did the terms were often, and systematically, more harsh than the terms offered to white males of class and privilege. Those same banking practices are still used widely today. Racism is an inherent and vital part of maintaining the structure of Capitalism and

cannot be ignored in this discussion, for those who control that initial capital control not only what types of products and manufacturing get invested in, but also who has the opportunity to succeed and grow within the system.

Now let us turn to the second half of the first part of the definition: "it has been generally characterized by a tendency towards concentration of wealth." I believe we have already sufficiently covered this point with the agreement that under Capitalism the rich get richer (which by default, it should be pointed out, directly implies that the poor get poorer).

Yet, it is important to also point out that with the concentration of wealth, the stage that we have been under for quite some time now (with shrinking resources, conquerable lands, and markets), fewer and fewer capitalists are actually required to maintain the system, which means less, not more, opportunities in the future.

Finally, for this section, let us look at: "in its later phase, by growth of great corporations, increased governmental control, etc." So wait, let us understand something here. There is a "later phase" of Capitalism. Capitalism has a natural progression that cannot simply be halted and what we have described so far is merely the "early phase," the "good phase," the "free market phase," of Capitalism. All that war and exploitation and discrimination that we talked about is the unregulated free market version of Capitalism, of which all those pundits want the government to get out of the way.

Somehow, supporters of Capitalism believe that if the government were to just step aside, the capitalists would miraculously regulate themselves, would no longer seek to maximize their profits, would be good stewards of the environment and economy, and every-man-for-himself would live in peace and tranquility—that finally we would all be free. Who are they trying to kid?

No one capitalist is an island to themselves. They are only able to benefit so greatly from the system because society is structured in a way that allows the one to be propped up by the many. But wait, now that they have technology, now that they have global trading, the capitalists don't need the many. They can get their cheap labor overseas. To hell with the common man. To hell with paying taxes for social services to support the society that they milked dry.

That is why we have a government—of the people, for the people, by the people—because corporations are not people and need to be taxed and regulated so that the people, so that our entire society, can manage and thrive. We are all codependent on each other for our own well being, and for the well being of all.

UNPACKING TRANSPHOBIA

—By Emma Allen, reprinted from
<http://www.radicalwomen.org/transphobia.shtml>

The majority of feminists are accepting of transpeople. But entrenched bigotry crops up even within the movement for women's rights. Transphobia and other forms of discrimination alienate feminists from their natural allies in the fight for liberation. It is important to be aware of and speak out against these poisonous prejudices.

Transphobia in the feminist community

In January 2013, the *New Statesman* published an article by the British journalist and feminist writer Susan Moore that received criticism for gratuitously using the word transgender in a derogatory way. In "Seeing Red: The Power of Female Anger," Moore wrote, "[Women] are angry with ourselves for not being happier, not being loved properly and not having the ideal body shape -- that of a Brazilian transsexual." Instead of apologizing, Moore chose to lash out with a hate-filled defense on Twitter, stating, "People can just fuck off really. Cut their dicks off and be more feminist than me. Good for them." She went on to say, "I use the word transsexual. I use a lot of 'offensive' words. If you want to be offended it's your prerogative." The following day she tweeted, "I am not going to apologise. Get it?" To other critics she wrote, "Read my essay. It is NOT about trans anything. Are you utterly thick? Don't bother answering that."

A day later her friend and feminist writer, Julie Burchill, wrote an article in Moore's defense for the *British Observer* titled "Transsexuals should cut it out." The article was soon removed for being too offensive and riddled with misconceptions. She heaps on even more hate speech with such statements as: "To have your cock cut off and then plead special privileges as women -- above natural-born women, who don't *know* the meaning of suffering, apparently..." She manufactures a contrived class analysis against transgender people who supposedly have "many lovely big swinging PhDs" and states:

[Moore] and I are part of the minority of women of working-class origin to make it in what used to be called Fleet Street and I think this partly contributes to the stand off with the trannies...We know that everything we have, we got for ourselves. We have no family money, no safety net. And we are damned if we are going to be accused of being privileged by a bunch of bed-wetters in bad wigs.

The accusation of upper-class privilege is at odds with the reality that transgender people experience unemployment at twice the rate of the general population. Burchill's false assumption is that transgender people don't know the suffering of biologically born women ignores the fact that transpeople are especially vulnerable to violence including sexual violence.

Transphobia in the feminist community isn't new and continues to be promoted by radical feminists such as Sheila Jeffreys, Germaine Greer, and Julie Bindel who pathologize transgenderism for a variety of reasons. They characterize being transgender in various ways: as an extremely kinky sexual practice or a mental illness such as body dysmorphic disorder. Sometimes the criticism is paternalistic in claiming that transgender people are merely exploited victims of the medical industry's drive to make money with various surgical and hormonal procedures. The 1994 book *Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male* by Janice Raymond

describes being transsexual as a medical invention manufactured to create profit. Another criticism is that transgender people reinforce gender roles or expression. For example, Germaine Greer once referred to transwomen as "ghastly parodies of women" with "too much eye-shadow." Sometimes the attacks on transgender people reach conspiracy levels by those who see the phenomenon as an effort by men to turn themselves into women in order to infiltrate "women"-only spaces.

Radical feminists Lierre Keith and Derrick Jensen blend transphobia with "anti-civilization" environmentalism in Deep Green Resistance (DGR). Julie Labrouste, a contact of Radical Women, was repudiated by DGR, which had been urging her to join until she mentioned she was trans-female. She shared the following email message that she received from the group:

There has been a great deal of controversy around DGR's stance on gender -- we are a radical feminist organization and as such the women in our group have requested that their women's spaces be women-only (women born women/female persons). Additionally, we believe that in general, trans*, transgenderism, and queer theory have been detrimental to the movement for women's liberation. This is fundamental to the DGR movement and informs our work against patriarchy and civilization. This is not something we are interested in debating or changing, so DGR is likely not the best fit for you.

Julie Bindel, another prominent radical feminist, promotes misconceptions by stating that "transsexualism, by its nature, promotes the idea that it is 'natural' for boys to play with guns and girls to play with Barbie dolls...the idea that gender roles are biologically determined rather than socially constructed is the antithesis of feminism." She blames transgender people for promoting sexual stereotypes because male-to-female transgenders are supposedly driven to achieve an ultra-feminine ideal. She overlooks the fact that being transgender is about self-identification and that what someone actually does to transition is up to them and doesn't necessarily include hormones or surgery.

All people who identify as female must deal with scrutiny if they don't look like a size zero Victoria's Secret model. Impossible beauty standards are not a burden that transgender people invented.

Radical feminism and the anti-trans analysis

At the heart of the attacks on transgender people is the traditional radical feminist notion of biological determinism, which interprets humans and human life from a strictly biological point of view - holding that biology is destiny. Their view that women's inferiority is based on their biology and that men are the enemy, is a reverse image of patriarchal hatred of women. The basis of radical feminism is to see men as the problem, painting women as the natural victims of men. If women are oppressed specifically because of the reproductive organs they are born with, rather than a deeper social-economic source of gender inequality, then transwomen can't be part of the club. Accepting the sisterhood of non-biological females challenges the very basis of radical feminism.

Radical feminists view women's oppression as *the* most important factor, expecting women of color to choose between their gender and their race. This has led to some outrageous incidents of racism.

Although radical feminists have traditionally been gender essentialists, some radical feminists have recently flipped the script to

EXCERPT FROM “MOVING BEYOND THE MEME – SOCIAL MEDIA, SUBVERSION, AND THE DIGITAL DIVIDE”

BY RYAN RICE

(reprinted by permission of the author)

Bloodshot eyes flit across glowing screens while pointer fingers twitch; clicking...reblogging...refreshing. Undulating middle-fingers scroll through a horde of “news.” More drone killings; shared. A meme against a rich person; liked. Suddenly, a special notification comes in. It’s not like the normal little red numbers at the top. This one is different. Eyes perk up and backs straighten, unexpectedly released from the weighty task of waking up the “sheeple.” The news? Banks have decided to cave under the pressure of facebook users’ solidarity avatars and have decided to give everyone a house. What’s more, the military contractors started to feel accountable due to the anti-war memes being spread around the internet. Sobered with guilt, they have decided to stop making war, despite the billions in profit. The puppet politicians are vacating their powerful positions in droves because, finally, enough infographics on their hypocrisy had been circulated. The bleeding heart masses of the Internet Class have successfully swayed the consciences of the powerful with the one-billionth social justice-related “like”. We did it.

I would hope this scenario seems ridiculous to you. I would hope that no one is under any illusions that this could one day actually happen. It seems obvious, doesn’t it? Unfortunately, the current trend in digital dissent suggests otherwise. Time and energy is being misdirected into a liberalized notion of “raising awareness” on

the Internet with no strategic thought as to what social media as a medium should be used for.

Let’s first be clear about this basic principle: there is a war going on for our minds. This is nothing new, nor should this fact surprise us. Every day brings a new bombardment of messaging meant to placate, confuse, misinform, terrorize, and control the powerless billions at the bottom.



The dominant narratives of capitalism, consumerism, imperialism, and pacification are all shaped through mediums such as radio, television, print, and now the Internet.

Standing in opposition to this onslaught of fascist propaganda are the self-described radicals, revolutionaries, anti-capitalists, and free thinkers. In the war of information, they have historically sold literature, handed out newspapers, delivered speeches, and broadcast pirate radio transmissions to both give a Peoples’ account of news and to also educate and mobilize supporters towards alternatives to the status quo.

In twenty-first century resistance, the Internet, and its social media component, has become a vital tool for dissent. But as Richard Downing notes in *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements*, the very medium itself, like anything, can be appropriated by capitalism. “Electricity, mail, telegraph, telephone, radio, television, and fax; these have all been turned into industries dominated by business, with further developments in their technologies manipulated for profit. As business has followed a

path of increasing monopoly in each of these industries, social actors have been forced to seek new avenues of communication.”

So we’re at the latest and greatest with this technology... until we’re forced to look for something new. For now, the Internet is as close to a horizontal and direct platform of communication that we’ve ever had. It makes Marx’s vision of global class revolt now seem plausible. There is less filtering from profit-driven media and there are more avenues of direct interaction and communication between social justice fighters. For example, the physical separation between striking students in Mexico City, Montreal, Chicago, and Madrid is made almost moot with live streaming footage, twitter updates, and interactive social media platforms. This doesn’t mean simply sharing a call for action; activists across the world can and should be learning praxis from one other with these tools.

When the cascade of direct actions to occupy public space began in the United States, social media platforms took center stage in both spreading awareness and mobilizing people to come outside.

Like the uprisings in the Middle East and Africa, these domestic occupations were organized and populated via tweets, facebook invites, and viral youtube clips. Thousands of camps popped up as folks used social media to coordinate one of the largest direct actions in United States’ history. I count myself among the many thousands that came outside because of technology, similar to when this Oakland resident became primed for action via a computer screen. I saw threads on reddit, followed livestream feeds from Manhattan, joined a chat room about Los Angeles, and finally, most importantly, became involved in

real life through a facebook event invitation.

A quick note before we continue: In the era of livestreams and instant updates, the phrase “the whole world is watching” is often heard. While it is a bit of an embellishment, the whole world does find out about the big story faster than ever thanks to online platforms. The triumphs of social media have been well-documented, and they’ve all had a common thread: social media is powerful when organizing and broadcasting direct actions. Activists with access have been instrumentally supportive when the police raise their weapons and when actions could use greater transparency or higher numbers.

I am writing here on persevering effectively in the valleys between the spontaneous uprisings and on guarding against perpetuating counterrevolutionary practices.

It has been nearly two years since Zuccotti sparked this latest wave of anti-establishment sentiment. While there is certainly a growing culture of resistance, that same



sentiment is not true in the shallow machinations of social media. All is not well in the land of digitally raised fists and revolutionary hash-tags. As newly-engaged activists ride the fading high of the “occupy movement,” many are sinking into ineffective and downright counterrevolutionary social media tactics. All that is left in many cities is a crumbling social media soapbox churning out infantile memes, solidarity avatars, and insular rhetoric with no strategic purpose beyond the consumer-driven click/

Continued on page 11...

IMPOSING DEMOCRACY

BY MARK LIPMAN

When you have to
Terrify your own
People into giving
Their freedoms away,
We say it's
Guaranteeing security.

When you invade
Another country
To steal their wealth
And establish your own regime,
We call it
Setting people free.

When you bomb
A tiny village
While all its people
Are fast asleep,
That is known as
Collateral damage.

And when you rob
From the poor
To subsidize
Your rich friends' wallets,
Well, I'd say that's graft,
But maybe you'd call it
Paying homage.

When there are
Police at every corner
No, that's not repression,
It's maintaining order.

When all the news
Tells you to follow
The government line,
They say that
Freedom of the press
Is doing just fine.

When you're not
Capable of an
Independent thought,
Then you've received
A good education.

And when your
Healthcare runs out,
That's just the benefits
Of privatization.

When we hide our
Sweat shops in China
We say that
Slavery is abolished.

When your vote
Isn't even being counted,
There are people who
Would call that
Universal suffrage.

When a baby is shot
By a stray bullet
Maybe it's officially
An accident,
But just try telling that
To the mother.

And when the ice caps are
melted
And the air is polluted,
No, that has not a thing
To do with your profits.

When you say
We're at war,
I ask you
When haven't we been?
That's their version
Of peace without end.

Why is it that
The rules suddenly change
When you're on

The wrong side
Of a color?

And while you're at it,
Can you explain to me
How life in prison
Without a trial
Could ever be
"For their own
protection?"

When you get to
choose,
Who has the right to
live,
Is that what is meant by
"Having God on your
side?"

When judges are
allowed
To hand out the jobs
Is that thanks to having
Free and open elections?

I don't know
What you think
About all this going on,
But if that's democracy
Then something's
Very, very wrong.

This poem is currently unpublished but will be featured in Luis's next book of poetry entitled *Love Letters to Luigi Gaellani*. For more info, and to purchase books by Luis, visit <http://theliteraryunderground.org/randomactsofterror/>

WHAT WE NEED IS LESS POETRY

BY LUIS RIVAS

once upon a time
well-paid office holders, omnipotent bankers,
opulent financial elites and other criminal elements
of the bourgeoisie feared the very soup they slurped
from their glossy, porcelain bowls, inspecting each
silver spoonful for whateverthefuck poison looks like

once upon a time
wall street bankers feared the horse-and-buggy
parked in front of the building in the middle of the day
noticing the immigrant and non-immigrant working
men and women in large groups with worn shoes,
faded slacks and coats, broke-in paper-thin tweed caps
discussing class, themean of production, chanting in
italian: lavoratori di tutto il mondo unitevi! and
brothers, did you hear what the russians are doing?
wall street bankers fearing every subsequent september
16 since 1920; the buildings on wall street still remember
the shoddy blasts of september 16, 1920 on an early
summer afternoon in the city as the sun struggled to
break through the overcast skies and failed

once upon a time
banks, police stations and court houses—places and
instruments of state repression, would shake with
improvised, distinct, tangible and direct explosions,
gripping their guns and trembling at each falling and
changing leaf, as a work boot crushes it, traumatizing
them with the sound of a tiny, far-off explosion

once upon a time
there was a time when john pierpont morgan, jr., the
merchant of death who initiated, financed and profited
off the first world war—he and all wall street feared
more than protests and signs, a time when they feared
more than unshowered occupiers, drug-addled and
ineffective general assemblies, unsightly tents with a
pillar of weed smoke coming out the flap, fair trade
vegan cookies, yoga circles, affinity groups,
committees and sub-committees and sub-sub-
committees, drum circles and meditation collectives

once upon a time
the finance capitalist hegemonic power structure
feared radical change, feared the communists, feared
the anarchists, feared an uprising, feared for their lives,
feared us

what we need is to resurrect the insurrectionary ghosts
of luigi gaellani, ulrike meinhof, ricardo flores magon,
and bhagat singh from the buried, unmarked graves of
history

what we need is less pacifism, not more
what we need is less political parties, not more
what we need is less rhetoric, not more
what we need is less chalking, more organizing
what we need is less heroes, more heroism
what we need is less theory, more actualizing
what we need is less poetry, not more
what we need is more anger, not less
what we need is the complete realization that
what we need is the understanding of the dialectic
of attaining peace through non-peaceful liberatory
resistance by an international, flagless nation of
working and oppressed people who, in their grips,
hold the fate of their own emancipation

what we need is not to occupy wall street, but to
destroy it

"Letter from Editors" continued...

of the last bastion of unionism in this country. Never mind also that mountains of research—like Margaret Raymond's massive "CREDO" study out of Stanford University—find that these non-unionized charters don't, for the most part, do any better than regular public schools (what a surprise to anarchists, who know that any compulsory, top-down, authoritarian system of education can't help but "leave behind" students in droves). Let the facts be damned! Even the teachers' unions won't stand firmly against the conversion of (admittedly hugely-flawed) public schools into (generally way worse) semi-private, corporatized charters.

It's pretty well-known that unions of the type we've been discussing operate (at best) on the Samuel Gompers "business unionism" model: "professional" unionists and "union leaders" act on behalf of

workers to collectively bargain for contracts, and to pool resources to elect labor-friendly politicians (these days, few unions even do those things effectively!). It doesn't take much insight to realize that such unions will never address, let alone challenge, the core problems of capitalism, hierarchy, and the state. And such electoral-directed unionism produces a class of bureaucrats whose only real ambition is to work their way up to the lower rungs of the political ladder. Make no mistake, these folks are often so highly-paid off of union members' dues—what a coincidence, seeing that they often use Machiavellian tactics to dictate union policy—that they don't even identify with their own class anymore. Mikhail Bakunin warned about this very class of bureaucrats over 140 years ago in his *Program of the Alliance* (look it up, if you haven't already, for an enlightening and unnerving read).

To recap: The capitalists and their corporations use money, power, and influence to bust unions and to direct the state to do the same. Meanwhile, the labor bureaucracy sits idly and complicitly by. What can a class-conscious anarchist do to stop this accelerating train wreck?

Well, there are alternative "radical" models of unionism—the IWW being an important, albeit small, case in point. These radical models have several key features in common: anti-capitalist and/or revolutionary politics, a focus on the rank-and-file (not union leaders), an insistence on democracy and horizontalism internal to unions, a program of political education for workers, a willingness to strike (and to call for General Strikes!), and an orientation toward workers' self-management and workers' control. As we said above, having workers unionized is a good thing, generally-speaking, for the working class. But every worker organized into an SEIU or a UTLA is a worker who is not going to receive the radical political education offered by the Wobblies. They will belong to a union that will be mostly unwilling to strike, and both de facto and de jure unable to engage in almost any political act other than lobbying legislators of the slightly-more-Left wing of the Big Business/ War Party



Duopoly. It stands to reason that anarchists should support the admittedly small-scale efforts of radical unions—or organize their own radical unions—because the mainstream unions at best can offer only measly improvements to already unlivable and unacceptable wages and working conditions. We said it above, and we'll say it again: the SEIUs of the world will never be willing or able to challenge the greed, authoritarianism, centralism, and hierarchy at the center of the world's political and economic systems. How could they? They belong to these very systems.

And this point brings us full circle to the issue posed in the opening paragraphs: the issue of "old" ideas. In this 21st-century milieu of "post-anarchy" and post-scarcity, of new forms of social networking, organizing and "Occupying," it can seem downright dinosaur-ish—and gauche 19th century—to push for radical labor unionism. However, as of this writing, there are thousands, maybe millions, of workers across this country who could benefit from just such an organizing push. We mean specifically the precarious laborers in the fast food corporate chains (like *shudder* McDonald's) and the retail sector (like the infamous Walmart). The Walmart struggle first came to LA with the international days of action in November 2012. Also starting around last November in New York City, the fast food workers' struggle has spread to Detroit, St. Louis, Kansas City, Seattle, and other cities; it will soon be coming to LA in the form of

SEIU-supported walk-outs to take place on August 29th. In fact, although both struggles involve a diffuse network of supporters, SEIU is all over both of them, hoping to rake in the dues money of thousands of new members—dues money that will fund more elections for Democrats and more sports cars for union-leader bigwigs.

The choice is ours to either help revivify the labor movement and spread radical unionism, or to allow the mainstream union bureaucracies to coopt the movement while Big Business and their cronies in the state houses slowly erode the final vestiges of the once formidable American labor landscape. What's it going to be?

To us, the choice seems simple. Let's join

forces with the Wobblies and the rest of the class-struggle, anti-authoritarian Left to help organize these, and all, workers. Let's openly advocate for workers self-management, for strikes, for expropriation, for anti-capitalism, for revolution. Let's organize radical caucuses inside of existing unions and organize radical locals in our workplaces. Let's encourage our neighbors to do the same, and walk the picket line with them when they do. Let's educate ourselves on radical labor history and share our knowledge with others. Let's march down the street, left fists up, singing "Solidarity Forever." Let's turn off the machines, block the streets, break some windows, and burn some tires.

Because the Masters give us no choice.

Because it's not just for us, but for the millions around the world suffering under the weight of American-centered global monopoly capitalism.

Because we must use all tools, old and new, if there's going to be any hope for the future.

Because—with all due respect to our po-mo, post-Lefty friends—everything old is new again.

Death to Capitalism, hierarchy, and the State!

All power to the weak, to the dispossessed, to the working masses!

--Your Humble Black Flag Editors.

For more, visit <http://theanarchistassociation.wordpress.com/>



A socialist take on gun violence, state violence, and workers' right to self-defense

Monica Hill

This Article Reprinted from *Freedom Socialist*, June 2013

The mad killing of 20 first-graders and six of their teachers in Newtown, Conn., followed by the mayhem of the Boston Marathon bombs, has ignited a passionate discussion about gun violence in the U.S.

Misery and death inflicted on the innocent, and especially children, are devastating. But the furor over these mass assaults by individuals — terrible, but rare — obscures the routine violence of a country spreading poverty at home and war abroad. And the mainstream debate doesn't even touch upon the need and right of working and oppressed people to effectively defend themselves against an inhumane social order that is utterly dependent on armed force to survive.

For anyone concerned about reducing violence, these are very real issues.

Poverty kills. Of all the U.S. deaths in 2000, 36 percent were caused by social diseases such as racist segregation, income inequality, inadequate social services, minimal education, and poverty. So concluded an impressive Columbia University study reported in the *American Journal of Public Health* in 2011.

By comparison, *just over 1 percent* of U.S. deaths in 2010 were gun deaths. And *three out of five* of these were suicides, not homicides.

It's clear that, first, these statistics hardly support tightening gun laws and, second, poverty and inequality are far more fatal than guns.

Joblessness, dangerous jobs, stingy or nonexistent healthcare, environmental ills, and systemic sexism and racism are taking a profound toll. Their cause is the capitalist economy, owned and run by a very few individuals of obscene wealth and power.

Integral to this economy is the weapons industry, with its arms lobbyists including the NRA. Now this industry's profits are bolstered by the permanent "war on terror," which has intensified the U.S. culture of militarism and provides justification for foreign wars and for repression, spying, and torture abroad and at home. They call it "national security," but the intent is to keep rebellion at bay.

When armed self-defense is needed. The Freedom Socialist Party, like socialists historically, supports the right of the oppressed class to physical self-defense.

In the U.S., armed self-defense has been essential for colonial, working-class and civil rights fighters — from the U.S. revolution against King George's military in the 18th century to the anti-slavery revolution of the Civil War 80 years later.

In his book *Negroes with Guns*, Robert Williams describes how Blacks in North Carolina who were organizing to integrate public swimming pools in the early 1960s had to fortify their homes with sandbags and train with rifles to stop night raids by the Ku Klux Klan. During the civil rights movement, guards for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. were armed as well as Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee members and Black Panthers. Being prepared for self-defense *prevented* blood from being shed.

In a long, hard 1973 strike in Harlan County, Ky., coal miners and their wives refused to back down from gun-toting company goons and took up weapons. That same year, American Indian Movement warriors held off FBI and tribal cops at Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge reservation.

Native Americans continue to take seriously their sovereign right to bear arms.

U.S. gun control has generally had as its targets the poor and oppressed, as with the disarming of former slaves in the South after the Civil War. Today, Florida is a case study in the double standard, with a "stand your ground" law protecting

paranoid racists, but Black mother Marissa Alexander sentenced to 20 years for firing into the ceiling to stop her abusive husband.

Collective resistance is still necessary to protect against government and right-wing violence. For instance, Radical Women has called for armed self-defense training to protect volunteer guards against harassers of abortion clinics, who have a record of bombings and murders.

Striking workers who face armed cops and company mercenaries also deserve

protection. So do activists who stand up to neo-Nazis or campaign against police brutality. So do those who are often prey to street violence: women, targets of racist and anti-gay thugs, people with mental and physical disabilities, the homeless. So do immigrants at the mercy of Border Patrol agents and vigilantes.

Communities could organize gun training with union members and neighborhood associations to defend all these groups, and many military vets would be willing to help.

The right to overthrow the system. Though guns are a small contributor to death and injury statistically, it's still true that many communities live under a shadow of gun violence from within.

More gun control laws are not the answer. What would help, and help in a big way, is legalizing drugs, funding effective drug rehab programs, and involving gang members and trusted community leaders in supporting gang truces.

But what will make the most difference in people's lives is attacking the violence of the system — which is at the root of most individual acts of harm to start with. Putting armed guards in schools has turned out to increase student expulsions, especially of kids of color. Instead, let's fight for reopening and fully funding closed public schools while reducing class sizes, preserving and expanding ethnic studies, bringing back art and music, and hiring more teachers, counselors, and librarians — and paying them better. Let's fight for generous funding to create productive jobs, restore social services, and provide quality physical and mental healthcare, including suicide prevention programs.

And let's fight for the money to pay for all of this by shutting down the Department of Homeland Security and the Pentagon. That would take care of oceans of gun violence!

Capitalism is proving in its time of trouble that it is willing to let people starve in isolation rather than pay for collective human welfare. And that it will protect itself "by any means necessary," in Malcolm X's famous phrase. The U.S. ruling class will bomb foreign countries, strip away civil liberties at home, throw the poor to the wolves, and put more people behind bars than anywhere else in the world.

For socialists, the popular right to self-defense is not a legalistic thing, it's a right of the working-class majority. It extends all the way from Mace in a woman's purse or pocket right on up to revolution to overthrow tyranny.

And isn't that exactly what we're facing?

Kathleen Merrigan contributed research for this story. Send feedback to Monica Hill at fsnews@mindspring.com



"Unpacking Transphobia" continued...

make it appear that they are the ones countering gender essentialism and that trans people are the ones reinforcing it. But while Bindel argues that transpeople reinforce biological determinism, she avoids the question that if gender is a social construct, why can't it be changed? She is merely singing the same song to a different tune in order to obscure good old-fashioned radical feminist essentialism.

Radical feminists claim that gender oppression can only be abolished by getting rid of the whole concept of gender and they view transgender people as a threat to that ideal. They contradict their desire to abolish gender when they claim that transwomen can't be true "women" because they don't know what it means to be oppressed as biological women. In reality, transwomen experience the pressures of sexism and frequently point out the stark contrast of how they are treated when the world perceives them as women.

Radical feminists mostly ignore transmen or claim, as Sheila Jeffreys does, that female-to-male transpeople are only trying to buy into male privilege. In her article "FTM Transsexualism and Grief," Jeffrey mourns that "FTM transsexualism destroys the lesbianism not just of the woman who 'transitions' but that of her female partner too." In *Unpacking Queer Politics*, Jeffreys asserts that all feminists should be lesbians or should adopt "political lesbianism" because women shouldn't sleep with their oppressors.

Socialist feminism's analysis of transgender oppression

In contrast to radical feminists, socialist feminists view the private property system as the historical and economic foundation for patriarchy and the subordination of women and sexual and gender outlaws.

It wasn't until the private property system evolved that gender roles were used against women. *The Radical Women Manifesto* refers to Frederick Engels and his work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*:

Engels does not ascribe the battle between the sexes to any inherent evil in one gender, but rather to the inexorable development of technology (the forces of production) and the corresponding upheavals in culture and family formations. This method of analysis is called "historical materialism."

The *Manifesto* states, "The source of women's power was in the original gender-based division of labor. But when surpluses first developed through the introduction of domestic herds of cattle it was the division of labor that gave rise to conflict and the subjugation of the female sex." Ultimately, "Women's role in society stems from social production not biology."

The role capitalist society has assigned to women is directly challenged by the existence of transgender, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, intersex and queer people – which is a good thing!

The *Manifesto* outlines Radical Women's support for the total liberation of sexual minorities and puts forward demands for outlawing discrimination, ending police harassment and violence against LGBTQ people, reversing discriminatory immigration laws, and ending vicious media portrayals.

Radical Women has fought for transpeople from the 1973 First

West Coast Lesbian Conference to participating in the 2007 United ENDA movement that pushed for inclusion of transpeople in the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). Radical Women welcomes transwomen as members and defends transpeople's right to respect within the queer movement as in society at large.

For decades being gay or lesbian or an uppity female was considered a mental illness, yet some feminists think it's ok to apply that pathology to transgender people. It really doesn't matter whether being gay, lesbian, or transgender is a choice or inborn. It should be up to the individual to determine their sexual identity or gender. These self-definitions should not be assigned or institutionalized by the capitalistic patriarchal system and certainly not by so-called feminists.

Feminism = human liberation

It seems that radical feminists have their priorities out of whack. They seem to see the biggest threat coming from transpeople and allies rather than attacks on abortion, economic exploitation or domestic violence. Online debates focus on not allowing transwomen in "women's" bathrooms as though there needs to be some sort of bathroom police on duty. These ridiculous debates detract from much more productive conversations on how to organize against sexism.

Anti-trans views ultimately come from a flawed, female-chauvinist analysis that sees sexism as *the* paramount issue and only weakly, if at all, takes into account how women's oppression intersects with racism, class, ableism, homophobia and of course transphobia. The solidarity that is needed to win liberation is only possible by understanding that different forms of oppression have a common basis in the private property system and that we have a common need to replace capitalism with a system of socialist equality. Under a socialist system, people will have the freedom to express their gender and sexuality in any way they choose. This is the society Radical Women is fighting for.

Transphobia comes from a minority of women in the feminist community but unfortunately it's a rather noisy minority. Their hatred does not have any place in our struggle. Feminism is supposed to be an ideology of transcending gender oppression and eliminating the strict binary definition of gender, not reinforcing it. Feminists should be against hatred and bigotry in all forms and respect everyone's right to biological autonomy.

Some helpful definitions:

Sex: Assigned biological category -- male or female: designated at birth by visual assessment of anatomy based upon presumption of reproductive role.

Sexual Orientation: Term for an individual's physical and/or emotional attraction relative to their own sex such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or straight.

Gender: The social meaning given to biological sex.

Gender Expression: External characteristics and behaviors associated with gender that are socially defined and associated with masculine or feminine. For transgender people, their gender expression doesn't match their biological sex.

Transgender: People who identify with a gender that is different from their biologically assigned gender.

Intersexed: Describes people who are born with external genitalia, chromosomes, or internal reproductive systems that are not traditionally associated with either a "standard" male or female.

Cis-gender: People who identify with the sex or gender they were assigned at birth.



ROCHESTER RED AND BLACK BUILDING A REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHISM SPEAKING TOUR!

(<http://rocredandblack.org/>)

How can we build the popularity and influence of anarchist ideas in movements for social and economic justice in the United States? What's the point in a specifically anarchist organization? What lessons can we draw from the anarchists of South America? What benefits would be gained by the development of a nationwide anarchist organization? What would that organization do and how can we get involved?

Building a Revolutionary Anarchism will share lessons and perspectives from activity in anarchist organization in the US and Argentina. Informed largely by the project and organizing model of *especificismo* coming out of South America, the presentation focuses on the necessity and current on-going efforts to build nationwide anarchist organization in the United States.

In 2007, Colin O'Malley traveled from Buffalo, New York to Buenos Aires, Argentina to learn from workers that were taking over their closing-down workplaces to run worker owned and operated cooperatives. Coming from a city devastated by the loss of industry and the decades long rustbelt economic crisis that followed, Colin wanted to know what was so different about workers and their organizations in Argentina that there could be such a drastically different reaction to workplace closures. There he spent time with some of the members of Red Libertaria, an Argentine anarchist organization.

On his return to Buffalo, he helped to found Buffalo Class Action, and with them built the presence of organized anarchism in Buffalo while advocating the creation of a citywide tenants union. Through BCA, he joined Common Struggle/Lucha Comun regional anarchist organization.

In 2011, he moved to Rochester, New York and helped to found Rochester Red & Black, another local anarchist organization. As part of these organizations, he has been involved in the Class Struggle Anarchist Conferences, the In Our Hearts Network, and has recently been advocating and helping to build a nationwide class struggle anarchist organization.

Final Tour Itinerary:

Saturday, July 20th: Knoxville, TN 3pm at The Birdhouse (800 North 4th Ave)
 Sunday, July 21st: Chattanooga, TN 7pm at a private house – comment with your email for details.
 Saturday, July 27th: Austin, TX 7pm at Monkey Wrench Books (110 E. North Loop)
 Monday, July 29th: El Paso, TX 7pm at Maternidad La Luz (1314 Magoffin Ave)
 Wednesday, August 7th: Los Angeles, CA 6pm at Centro Cultural Papalut (3201 Maple Ave)
 Saturday, August 10th: San Jose, CA 5pm at San Jose Peace and Justice Center (48 South 7th St.)
 Sunday, August 11th: Eureka, CA 6pm at the Ink Annex (47 W 3rd and Commercial)
 Tuesday, August 13th: Portland, OR 7pm at Red & Black Cafe (400 SE 12th Ave)
 Wednesday, August 14th: Seattle, WA 7pm at Black Coffee Coop (510 E Pine St)
 Saturday, August 17th: Salt Lake City, UT
 Monday, August 19th: Denver, CO 7pm at 27 Social Centre (2727 W 27th Ave)
 Wednesday, August 21st: St. Louis, MO 7pm at the World Community Center (438 N. Skinker Blvd.)
 Thursday, August 22nd: Iowa City, IA 7pm at PSZ (120 N. Dubuque St.)
 Friday, August 23rd: Milwaukee, WI 5:30pm at The Fort (703 E Center St.)
 Sunday, August 25th: Chicago, IL 4pm at MAGI Cultural Art Center (2149 W. 21st St.)
 Tuesday, August 27th: Buffalo, NY



"Defining Capitalism" continued...

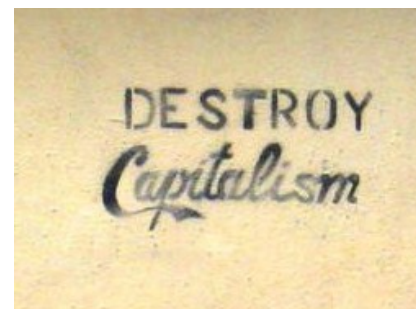
Finally, let us look at the second part of the definition: Capitalism is: "2. The principles, methods, interests, power, influence, etc. of capitalists, especially those with large holdings." "Principles," by definition, means the "ultimate source, fundamental truth, law, doctrine and motivating force." For Capitalism, the stated and widely accepted driving principle is "the profit motive," in other words, money. The single most important goal for capitalists is attaining personal "private" wealth for themselves. That is it. By the definition of the word, the underlying principle of Capitalism is greed.

"Methods"—Let us recap the methods of Capitalism so that we do not forget. They are: war, murder, slavery, exploitation, theft and deception. Some may argue that hard work and dedication are also methods of attaining profit; however, those are in reality only minor contributing factors, for great wealth under Capitalism derives primarily from being able to take as much as you can get, by any means necessary.

"Interests"—This again has already been clearly defined as "profit."

However, the ability to control the profit, and the resources from which that profit is derived, is by far the greatest of interests for the capitalists. For from that control derives the power with which to influence and control others, especially the politicians within the government, who under the influence of the capitalists, instead of regulating them, clear the path for them to climb through the ranks and over the dead bodies left in the wake of Capitalism, where they then arrive logically at the final position of world domination.

So when we speak of Capitalism that is what we are speaking of.



"Moving Beyond the Meme" continued...

share success story.

In the absence of spontaneous ruptures, this poisonous mentality can dominate, and this needs to be addressed if we hope to see effective resistance against the oppressive institutions keeping us in subjugation. The power in social media is not found in countering bankers' power with a LOLCAT meme calling for prison time. It is not found in inundating supporters with another story on faraway violence or repression to "raise awareness" for a privileged Internet class that feels accomplished by being "in the know" and clicking "like." That isn't enough. Not only is it not enough, it can facilitate a slide towards impotence and stupefaction.

In "The Internet and an Informed Citizenry," Carpi and Keeter highlight the potential pitfalls of falling into placating behaviors online:

"A second and perhaps equally plausible scenario would predict a general decline in levels of political knowledge, however. In this view the Internet serves to divert the public from things political—a giant box of chocolates that lures citizens away from the nourishing food they need... And Internet-driven declines in the opportunities and need to directly interact with other citizens in public spaces (especially with citizens different from oneself) could further erode the kind of community bonds that lead to political interest and thus to political learning."

In true Orwellian fashion, social media is just another tool for the state to co-opt and for the ruling class to control to narrow the conversation, frame the debate, and manage the outcome of popular unrest. The advent of the 140 character-culture, 24/7 news and infotainment cycle, "instant gratification complex" is being catered to rather than fought against. The quest for higher numbers and more views has activists aiming for successes within a capitalist framework while ignoring the far more important duty of facilitating dialogue in this digital public commons. Two prominent examples come to mind when I think of the problem of celebrating the popularity contest instead of aiding deconstructive exploration.

First, there is the story of Christopher

Dorner, the former LAPD officer that penned a damning expose on the systemic racism of police, allegedly murdered several people, and caused one of the largest manhunts in American history before being killed in a burning cabin. The social media team at Occupy Los Angeles posted a "meme" with a picture of Dorner and the words "Rest in Power: assassinated by the police for trying to expose LAPD corruption" which quickly went viral. Following the sensational vapidness of "if it bleeds, it leads," Los Angeles activists used their digital megaphone to glorify an individual cop instead of using the moment to have a discussion about the violence of police as an institution against the poor and communities of color. Dorner is not the first situation of a "chicken coming home to roost", and the duty of dissent must be to connect those dots. Unfortunately, strategy did not go beyond a desire for clicks, so activists felt successful when the post brought "Occupy Los Angeles" into the spotlight of the mainstream media and right-wing groups like Breitbart without realizing the lost opportunity for a deeper conversation.



The failure here is in not recognizing that less "popular" conversations that examine the root of the issue are far more important to a culture of resistance than the number of shares. The same concept is highlighted in a second example of the recent 2012 election and proposition cycle. Because of the mainstream pressure to have a position on the props and the candidates, occupiers in Los

Angeles became frothy at the mouth, using insular social media spaces to spout positions and stances for the items up for a vote. The problem was that all of these conversations were in private, in secret occupy groups and pages, with zero facilitation of the conversation around representational politics for the online supporters. Due to the infighting, there was a noticeable absence of activity around the election, a clear missed opportunity. Bowing to the capitalist

concept of popularity should never be a priority for a radical dissident. It's an external threat in terms of platforms' audience and inherent focus. More importantly, it's also an internal colonization of the mind, something that destructively inflates the ego and creates a façade of superficial mass support.

In actuality, digital dependence is altering how we interact with the people and issues around us. We have become consumers of information, communication, relationships, thoughts, and desires. Participation in life is increasingly through the Internet. This is disarming resistance and misdirecting energy away from systemic challenges. And this is being welcomed by the elites, as the biggest deterrent to tyranny is an educated and informed populace. There has been a detrimental increase in macro-knowledge with a simultaneous uptick in micro-isolation, as the mainstream press will even acknowledge. We are more connected than ever, but those ties are "weak ties" as opposed to the stronger connections people develop with "IRL" (in real life) moments.

Malcolm Gladwell discusses how efforts are increasingly inadequate in "Small Change: Why the Revolution will not be Tweeted":

"The evangelists of social media don't understand this distinction; they seem to believe that a facebook friend is the same as a real friend and that signing up for a donor registry in Silicon Valley is activism in the same sense as sitting at a segregated lunch counter in Greensboro in 1960. 'Social networks are particularly effective at increasing motivation,' Aaker and Smith write.

But that's not true.

Social networks are effective at increasing participation — by lessening the level of motivation that participation requires... In other words, facebook activism succeeds not

by motivating people to make a real sacrifice but by motivating them to do the things that people do when they are not motivated enough to make a real sacrifice. We are a long way from the lunch counters of Greensboro."

Gladwell recognizes how systemic challenges triumph when you put your body on the line in addition to your typing fingers. A great example of this narrowing of breadth and effect via social media by the elites is found in the recent barrage of Human Rights Campaign (HRC)



To donate, just place the clothing in a plastic bag and contact us. We have volunteers that are willing and able to pick them up. This is very low-cost project involving little to no money. And, of course, there is no charge for the clothing given to the community. It is given away 100% free. It really just takes free clothing and the work of a few volunteers. We are requesting both.

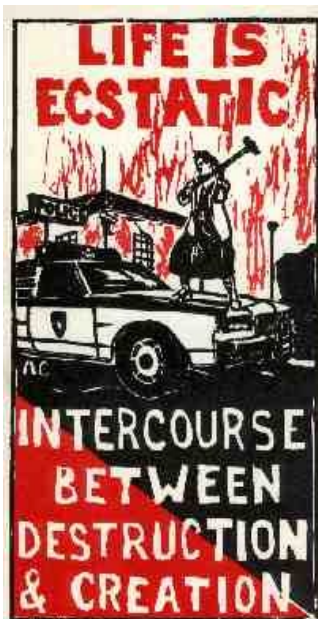
For more info, to donate, or to volunteer, please contact the
F@(@ at faacollective@gmail.com.



red equal-sign avatars. As with the green screen VFX avatar or “Solidarity with (insert tragedy-of-the-hour)” multitudes, the reddened logo hit the internet to support gay marriage as the Supreme Court convened to decide if they’d grant Americans equal rights. The logical fallacy of anyone “granting rights” aside, this maelstrom of red profile pictures certainly raised awareness about the decision and let friends and family know where one stood. But that’s about all the positivity it brought.

[illegible]

To read the rest of Ryan's searing and insightful analysis, visit <http://politicalfailblog.com/archives/7399> or request a text-only copy by emailing faacollective@gmail.com



Ryan Rice is a writer, activist, and independent journalist residing in Los Angeles. He became active in the struggle for social justice in his work with Occupy LA in 2011 and continues fighting within an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, and anti-colonialist framework. You can visit him on Tumblr at <http://thewanderingbarricade.tumblr.com/> and at his Blog at <http://thewanderingbarricade.wordpress.com/>

The Black Flag is always looking for contributions from Black and/or Red individuals and groups. Original content and reprints (with permission of the author) accepted. Send all submissions as a Word document or pdf attachment to faacollective@gmail.com.

Ⓐ INVESTIGATION Ⓐ PHILOSOPHY Ⓐ ANNOUNCEMENTS Ⓐ SHOUT-OUTS Ⓐ RANTS Ⓐ